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Message Text

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PAGE 01 DURBAN 00256 271718Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /011 W
----------072662 271725Z /64
O 271035Z APR 78 ZFF4
FM AMCONSUL DURBAN
TO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN IMMEDIATE
INFO USICA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2898
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG IMMEDIATE

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USICA

CAPE TOWN FOR CHARGE

EO 11652: NA
SUBJ: POLICE INQUIRY RE "ROOTS"

REF: PRETORIA 1816

1. NEAR END OF FINAL SHOWING OF "ROOTS" AT U OF NATAL ON 4/26, POLICEMAN APPROACHED UNIVERSITY'S DIRECTOR OF EXTRAMURUL STUDIES, ROBIN MACKIE, AND ASKED IF FILMS HAD BEEN CLEARED BY S.A. CENSORS. MACKIE SAID HE DID NOT KNOW, AS FILMS BE-LONGED TO AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER. POLICEMAN POLITELY POINTED OUT THAT HE WAS EMPOWERED TO INTERRUPT FILM SHOWING UNTIL QUESTION OF CENSORS' APPROVAL CLEARED UP, BUT SAID HE WOULD NOT DO SO IF MACKIE WOULD APPEAR AT POLICE STATION NEXT MORNING. MACKIE AGREED, POLICEMAN LEFT, AND SHOWING CONTINUED.

2. MACKIE IMMEDIATELY INFORMED BPAO AND ASKED FOR GUIDANCE. AFTER CHECKING WITH CPAO BY PHONE BPAO SUGGESTED AND MACKIE AGREED THAT HE SHOULD POINT OUT TO POLICE THAT "ROOTS" HAD
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ALREADY BEEN SHOWN UNDER ICA AUSPICES IN PRETORIA, JOHANNESBURG AND SOWETO, AND THAT QUESTIONS CONCERNING CLEARANCE OF ICA FILMS BY S.A. CENSORS SHOULD IN ANY CASE BE DIRECTED TO AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER.

3. POLICE TOLD MACKIE NEXT MORNING THAT THEY DID NOT WANT TO MAKE BIG DEAL OUT OF QUESTION OF CLEARANCE. THEY WERE INQUIRING

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ABOUT "ROOTS" ONLY BECAUSE THEY HAD RECEIVED COMPLAINT FROM SOMEONE VIEWING SERIES ABOUT ITS CONTENT. THEY DID FEEL, HOWEVER, THAT UNIVERSITY SHOULD KNOW THAT ALL FILMS SHOWN IN S.A. SHOULD BE CLEARED BY CENSORS, EVEN FILMS SUPPLIED BY DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS. TO SUPPORT LATTER POINT, THEY SHOWED MACKIE COPIES OF LETTERS FROM ITALIAN CONSULATE REQUESTING CENSORS' APPROVAL OF FILMS WHICH ITALIAN GOVERNMENT WISHED TO SHOW TO S.A. AUDIENCES. POLICE THEN SAID QUESTION OF WHERE FILMS WERE SHOWN DID MAKE DIFFERENCE. THEY FELT NEED TO RAISE ISSUE NOW BECAUSE "ROOTS" WAS BEING SHOWN AT UNIVERSITY. THEY THEN ASKED MACKIE IF ANOTHER ICA FILM "PORTREITS OF COURAGE", WHICH IS SCHEDULED TO BE SHOWN AT UNIVERSITY ON MAY 18, HAD BEEN CLEARED BY CENSORS. MACKIE SAID HE DID NOT KNOW.

4. POLICE AGAIN EMPHASIZED THEIR DESIRE NOT TO MAKE FEDERAL CASE OUT OF IT, AND SAID THEY WOULD BE SATISFIED IF UNIVERSITY WOULD PAY 100 RAND FINE AS PRO FORMA ADMISSION OF GUILT. THEY ADDED THAT THEY WOULD EVEN ALLOW OUR LAST SHOWING OF "ROOTS" AT PIETERMARITZABURG CAMPUS OF U OF NATAL, SCHEDULED TO TAKE PLACE EVENING OF 4/27, TO GO ON IF FINE WERE PAID.

5. MACKIE TOLD POLICE, AND BPAO SUBSEQUENTLY, THAT DECISION AS TO WHETHER TO PAY FINE AND ALLOW LAST PIETERMARITZBURG SHOWING OF "ROOTS" WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE BY UNIVERSITY'S RECTOR. HE IS SEEING RECTOR MID-DAY 4/27.

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6. WILL ADVISE.
HUGHES

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NNN

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